CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A software method for analyzing relationships between individuals comprising the steps of:

recording at least one relationship based upon organization structure;

recording at least one relationship based upon project-specific collaborations;

recording at least one relationship based upon social interactions;

querying said recorded relationships; and

generating a query result from said querying step, wherein said querying step queries organizational relationship data, project-specific relationship data, and social relationship data.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

associating an affinity value to at least one said relationships, wherein said affinity value quantifies a relative strength of said relationship.

3. The method of claim 2, said associating step further comprising the step of:

associating a first affinity value to said relationship to indicate the relative strength of the relationship in one direction; and

associating a second affinity value to said relationship to indicate the relative strength of the relationship in another direction, whereby said relationship is a bidirectional relationship.

4. The method of claim 1, said querying step further comprising the steps of:

identifying at least two individuals; and

determining at least one relationship linkage between said identified individuals.

5. The method of claim 4, said determining step further comprising the steps of:

determining at least two relationship linkages between said identified individuals;

determining a linkage strength for said each relationship linkage; and

selecting a preferred one of said relationship linkages based upon said linkage strengths.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein each linkage strength is based at least in part upon affinity values for relationships included within relationship linkages.

7. The method of claim 1, said generating step further comprising the step of:

generating at least one chart illustrating said query result.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said chart is a unified relationship chart, wherein said unified relationship chart illustrates relationships among individuals, wherein said illustrated relationships include data from at least two different relationship categories.

9. The method of claim 7, said step of generating said chart further comprising the steps of:

illustrating individuals as nodes and relationships as line segments connecting said nodes; and

illustrating different relationship categories using visually distinct line segments.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

detecting at least one communication between two individuals; and

automatically updating at least one recorded relationship for said individuals responsive to said communication.

11. A relationship management system comprising:

a data storage framework for storing multiple relationships of a plurality of relationship categories, wherein said relationship categories include organizational relationships, project-specific relationships, and social relationships; and

a query engine configured to receive inquiries and responsively generate responses based on data stored within said data storage framework.

12. The relationship management system of claim 11, further comprising:

a relationship illustrator configured to graphically illustrate said responses.

13. The relationship management system of claim 11, further comprising:

a linkage analyzer configured to determine at least one relationship linkage between two individuals.

14. The relationship management system of claim 11, further comprising:

a relationship weight engine configured to manage affinity values stored within said data storage framework, wherein said affinity values are associated with at least a portion of said relationships, and wherein said affinity values quantify a relative strength of associated relationships.

15. A machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

recording at least one relationship based upon organization structure;

recording at least one relationship based upon project-specific collaborations;

recording at least one relationship based upon social interactions;

querying said recorded relationships; and

generating a query result from said querying step, wherein said querying step queries organizational relationship data, project-specific relationship data, and social relationship data.

16. The machine-readable storage of claim 15, further comprising the steps of:

associating an affinity value to at least one said relationships, wherein said affinity value quantifies a relative strength of said relationship.

17. The machine-readable storage of claim 16, said associating step further comprising the step of:

associating a first affinity value to said relationship to indicate the relative strength of the relationship in one direction; and associating a second affinity value to said relationship to indicate the relative strength of the relationship in another direction, whereby said relationship is a bidirectional relationship.

18. The machine-readable storage of claim 15, said querying step further comprising the steps of:

identifying at least two individuals; and

determining at least one relationship linkage between said identified individuals.

19. The machine-readable storage of claim 18, said determining step further comprising the steps of:

determining at least two relationship linkages between said identified individuals;

determining a linkage strength for said each relationship linkage; and

selecting a preferred one of said relationship linkages based upon said linkage strengths.

20. The machine-readable storage of claim 19, wherein each linkage strength is based at least in part upon affinity values for relationships included within relationship linkages.

21. The machine-readable storage of claim 15, said generating step further comprising the step of:

generating at least one chart illustrating said query result.

22. The machine-readable storage of claim 21, wherein said chart is a unified relationship chart, wherein said unified relationship chart illustrates relationships among individuals, wherein said illustrated relationships include data from at least two different relationship categories.

23. The machine-readable storage of claim 21, said step of generating said chart further comprising the steps of:

illustrating individuals as nodes and relationships as line segments connecting said nodes; and

illustrating different relationship categories using visually distinct line segments.

24. The machine-readable storage of claim 15, further comprising the steps of:

detecting at least one communication between two individuals; and

automatically updating at least one recorded relationship for said individuals responsive to said communication.

25. A system for analyzing relationships between individuals comprising the steps of:

means for recording at least one relationship based upon organization structure;

means for recording at least one relationship based upon project-specific collaborations;

means for recording at least one relationship based upon social interactions;

means for querying said recorded relationships; and

means for generating a query result from said querying step, wherein said querying step queries organizational relationship data, project-specific relationship data, and social relationship data.

26. A software method for managing relationships comprising the steps of:

receiving data for a plurality of relationships involving a plurality of individuals;

categorizing said relationships into a plurality of categories;

recording said categorized relationships;

querying said recorded relationships based upon specified relationship parameters; and

generating a relationship report responsive to said querying step, wherein said relationship report contains relationship data from at least two of said categories.

27. The method of claim 26, further comprising the steps of:

determining an affinity value for each of said relationships, wherein said affinity value quantifies a relative relationship strength.

28. The method of claim 26, further comprising the steps of:

dynamically modifying at least a portion of said recorded relationships based upon communication events occurring within an information management system.

29. A machine-readable storage having stored thereon, a computer program having a plurality of code sections, said code sections executable by a machine for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

receiving data for a plurality of relationships involving a plurality of individuals;

categorizing said relationships into a plurality of categories;

recording said categorized relationships;

querying said recorded relationships based upon specified relationship parameters; and

generating a relationship report responsive to said querying step, wherein said relationship report contains relationship data from at least two of said categories.

30. The machine-readable storage of claim 29, further comprising the steps of:

determining an affinity value for each of said relationships, wherein said affinity value quantifies a relative relationship strength.

31. The machine-readable storage of claim 29, further comprising the steps of:

dynamically modifying at least a portion of said recorded relationships based upon communication events occurring within an information management system.

32. A system for managing relationships comprising the steps of:

means for receiving data for a plurality of relationships involving a plurality of individuals;

means for categorizing said relationships into a plurality of categories;

means for recording said categorized relationships;

means for querying said recorded relationships based upon specified relationship parameters; and means for generating a relationship report responsive to said querying step, wherein said relationship report contains relationship data from at least two of said categories.